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Understanding Pragmatics and Decoding Meaning in Daily Communication

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Annotation. This article gives information about basement of pragmatics and daily communication. It explains difference between semantics and pragmatics with clear examples. The paper emphasizes, the core of pragmatics, hidden and intended meanings and explains the role of deixis in pragmatics. Clear explanations and examples are provided by the writer.
Key words: pragmatics, daily communication, hidden meaning, semantics, deixis, literal meaning, social context, implicature.

Learning a language is a complex and long process for every learner, and it requires constant maintenance and strong effort. Any person who starts this process gains knowledge through learning grammatical rules and new vocabulary with the help of dictionaries and other sources. However, they realize later that learning a language is not only about these two requisites; it also contains some hidden aspects of context, meaning, and intent that help to show language more meaningful and natural. As a result, these factors lead us straight into the world of pragmatics. Regardless of origin or nationality , every language owns its own semantics and pragmatics system, surely, English is no exception. This language possesses its own distinctive features of semantics and pragmatics.

First of all, differentiating between pragmatics and semantics is vital for linguistic development. Semantics is a branch of linguistics that focuses on the direct meaning of the words in the dictionary and how sentence sturucture works by altering word order to change the semantic logic. In semantics, every detail is literal and direct, it does not analyze the speaker`s hidden intentions or social interactions. For instance, the word of 'book' simply defines an item that consists of multiple paper pages including written information and sometimes pictures. When it comes to sentence structure and how shifting word order completely changes meaning, consider the given example. 'A horse is on the mat', its semantic function is to describe the physical location of horse, it emphasizes where horse is standing. If we change it ' A mat on the horse , the semantic logic of the given sentences entirely shifts and it means the positions of object and where it has located.

On the other hand, pragmatics explores how language is used in real-life situations and it mainly focuses on hidden parts of communication, for example, speaker`s intonation, tone and intentions. The main difference is that pragmatics focus on real life situation to understand better read the sample conversation below:

English lesson and teacher asked students to write their copybook. Fred and Ann were sitting together and Ann said to Fred

Ann: - Oh, I left my pen at home. I can not write now..

Fred: - I have two pens, you can use any of them.

Here Ann is not asking his pen directly but Fred on his own understand her hidden intention and offered his pen. If we analyze Ann`s speech semantically, she simply said she left her pen at home and right now she does not own anything to write but her sentence has implicature and her partner understood it. As noted by George Yule (1996, p 3), ptagmatics 'the study of speaker meaning' that focuses on more speaker`s hidden intention rather than literal words they use.

Deixis is one of the cruicial conception of pragmatics branch and it originally came from Greek, means 'pointing' or 'indicating'.

They are:

- Person deixis :I, you and he
- Place deixis: here and there
- Time deixis: today, tomorrow, now and then.

Their meanings change depending on who is speaking, where and when they are speaking, For example, ‘put it here’ this sentence is not meaningless, but if you understand what speaker is pointing by using ‘here’ and ‘it’ in real life you will comprehend what he means. Those words are only valid only in that specifdic situation, outside of it, they lose their clear reference.

In conclusion, language is much more complex than we imagine and hidden meanings, intentions enrich the language. While semantics give us literal meanings, pragmatics prove that how language is used, what people actually mean in real life situations. Ultimately, pragmatics is the clear sample of how language is a flexible tool for communication between humans.